

Mike Wicklund said there were no significant items to report for July. Palmer Lake District Manager Duane Hanson reported that the district is a third of the way through its annual collection line cleaning and videoing. Woodmoor Assistant District Manager Randy Gillette reported that most of the district's line cleaning and videoing has been completed. A small amount of re-lining of some collection lines was to begin in mid-August.

**Facility manager's report**

Burks reported that the plant was operating very efficiently. "Everything's running very well," he said. The quarterly whole effluent toxicity tests showed zero toxicity. The plant is operating at 27 percent of its flow capacity and 44 percent of its waste treating capacity. Total sludge removed to date this year was 240 tons of 350 tons scheduled.

A new alternate nitrate testing procedure will be used for analyzing the higher state blind testing sample concentrations that are being sent to the facility for quality assurance testing. The staff will continue to use the more accurate low concentration procedures that are more appropriate for the routine testing of the facility's effluent samples. The plant's effluent has much lower nitrate concentrations than the state blind samples.

Burks said the Monument/Fountain Creek monitoring group was currently analyzing and prioritizing the sampling points on these streams from Palmer Lake to John Martin Reservoir on the Arkansas River below Pueblo.

**Regulations report**

Jim Kendrick, Operations, Monument Sanitation District, reported that the state Water Quality Control Division has just begun to implement unprecedented

hybrid water quality standards for arsenic following an Aug. 13 Water Quality Control Commission hearing. This sudden unexpected shift in policy came about following the turnover of three of the nine commissioners.

This new hybrid standard sets both a human health drinking water limit and a separate limit based on the level of toxins absorbed into consumable fish flesh for each stream segment throughout the state. The Littleton/Englewood and Boulder wastewater treatment facilities protested both of the new hybrid arsenic limits as both technologically and economically unattainable and unsustainable and were given temporary short-term discharger specific variances.

The now-approved human health limit for arsenic, 20 parts per trillion, is far lower than can be achieved by any known or forecast treatment technology, which means that every facility in the state will have to petition for a waiver on all its future discharge. The fish limit portion of the arsenic hybrid limit is 2 parts per billion. The best technological treatment available at this time can only reduce arsenic to 3 parts per billion.

Kendrick noted that this sudden change to hybrid limits makes it even more important to expand the breadth of stream monitoring to include testing of the other creeks that flow into Monument Creek near the Tri-Lakes facility. Testing must provide enough data to determine which contributions to instream pollutant levels are from "non-point" sources. Non-point sources are those other than wastewater facilities or a specific manufacturing plant and include agriculture and stormwater runoff, mine tailings, and naturally occurring erosion from unde-

veloped land. Pollutant levels from these other sources are compared to those from treated wastewater.

A relevant example of a non-point source is the widespread erosion that occurs during storms in undeveloped areas surrounding the tributaries of the Arkansas River surrounding Pueblo, where there is a much higher average concentration of selenium in the soil.

The state Health Department has no authority or control over agricultural non-point sources like farms and ranches or their nutrient and E. coli contributions to state waters. Monument Creek is on the state's 303 (d) list of impaired stream segments for E. coli pollution that comes primarily from non-point sources. However, the EPA and the Water Quality Control Commission have placed tight controls on wastewater treatment plants that are not causing the problem, because they are the only entities that they can regulate.

The new, much lower nutrient discharge permit limits in Control Regulation 85 and Regulation 31 prohibit any wastewater facility from even applying for any discharger specific variances unless the facility can prove that it is not contributing significantly to high concentrations of pollutants in a stream segment and that they are naturally occurring or coming from other non-point sources. A wastewater facility will have to prove it is innocent of causing any water quality impairments of any stream segment within 50 miles of its treatment plant discharge pipe from now on.

Few, if any, wastewater facilities have monitoring programs in place to gather such exculpatory evidence except the members of the South Platte Coalition for Urban River Evaluation, the coalition that the Monument/Fountain Creek monitoring group plans to emulate.

The state and EPA are now arguing

that the new human health hybrid standards are a federal mandate that would exempt the new state regulatory requirements from being classified as state unfunded mandates. That would absolve the state from having to provide financing for all the statewide wastewater treatment capital improvements that must be made to comply with Control Regulation 85 and Regulation 31.

Kendrick reported that the Water Quality Control Commission also decided on Aug. 13 that it would no longer control statewide engineering design criteria through its Policy 96-1. The Water Quality Control Division successfully petitioned to take control of these criteria internally through a new Division Policy 1. In recent years the division has been very slow to provide review, comment, and approval of the design proposals that have to be submitted before a wastewater facility can be modified or expanded.

For more information on this issue, see:

- www.ocn.me/v12n7.htm#juc
- www.ocn.me/v12n7.htm#msd
- www.ocn.me/v12n6.htm#juc
- www.ocn.me/v12n6.htm#msd
- www.ocn.me/v12n5.htm#juc
- www.ocn.me/v12n5.htm#msd
- www.ocn.me/v12n4.htm#cwqcc
- www.ocn.me/v12n3.htm#nutrients
- www.ocn.me/v12n2.htm#juc

The meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

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The next JUC meeting will be held at 10 a.m. on Sept. 11 at the Tri-Lakes facility's conference room, 16510 Mitchell Ave. Meetings are normally held on the second Tuesday of the month. Information: 481-4053.

Jim Kendrick can be reached at jimkendrick@ocn.me.

**Monument Sanitation District, Aug. 16**

**Draft 2013 budget shows cost increases**

By Jim Kendrick

On Aug. 16, District Manager Mike Wicklund presented his draft 2013 budget to the Monument Sanitation District board. It included significant cost increases for the district's share of burgeoning nutrient treatment costs in the proposed 2013 Tri-Lakes Wastewater Treatment Facility budget. The total Tri-Lakes facility budget increases from \$801,114 in 2012 to \$932,561, a 16.4 percent increase. Because most of the increase is a capital cost for treating total phosphorus, Monument will pay a third of

the increase of about \$131,000.

Wicklund said he would present budget options for increasing the district's current monthly residential fee of \$25 per month by \$5, \$7, and \$10 to cover the rapid growth in operating costs that the district faces in both 2013 and 2014 due to the imposition of much tighter state Health Department restrictions on the plant for treating total phosphorus, total nitrogen, arsenic, and heavy metals.

For more information on these long-feared Tri-Lakes facility operating cost increases, see the Aug. 14 JUC article on

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